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ACTION ARA-15

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INFO OCT-01 ISO-00 HA-05 MCT-02 AID-05 IO-14 CIAE-00
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FM AMEMBASSY BUENOS AIRES
TO SECSTATE WASHDC IMMEDIATE 7810
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E.O. 11652: GDS
TAGS: SHUM, AR
SUBJECT: JOURNALIST CHARGED

ARGENTINA PROJECT (S200000044)
U.S. DEPT. OF STATE, A/RPS/TPS
Margaret P. Grafeld, Director
(X) Release () Excise () Deny
Exemption(s): _____
Declassify: () In Part (X) In Full
() Classify as _____ () Extend as _____ () Downgrade to _____
Date _____ Declassify on _____ Reason _____

REF: BUENOS AIRES 7797

1. IN WHAT WE REGARD AS A DEPARTURE FROM USUAL HANDLING OF SUCH CASES THE GOVERNMENT ANNOUNCED YESTERDAY THAT ENRIQUE ESTEBAN HAS BEEN PLACED UNDER ARREST BY MILITARY AUTHORITIES CHARGED WITH AIDING IN THE FLIGHT OF AN ALLEGED TERRORIST, LUIS BORRIS, CHARACTERIZED IN THE ANNOUNCEMENT AS AN "EJERCITO POPULAR DE LIBERACION" MEMBER. FOUR OTHER PERSONS WERE ANNOUNCED TO HAVE BEEN DETAINED IN THE SAME CASE: ARMANDO SERGIO POLLASTRI, CESAR AMERICO CARNEVALLI, JACOBO AISEMBERT AND JOSE DELLORO--ALL OF NEUQUEN.

2. THE ANNOUNCEMENT WAS MADE BY THE "COMMANDER OF SUB-ZONE 52" BASED IN NEUQUEN, WHOM DAO RECORDS INDICATE IS BRIG. GENERAL SEXTON OF THE SIXTH MOUNTAIN INFANTRY BRIGADE. THE EJERCITO POPULAR DE LIBERACION (EPL) IS DESCRIBED IN THE REPORT AS THE ARMED BRANCH OF THE "PARTIDO COMUNISTA MARXISTA ARGENTINO" (PCMA). EMBASSY RECORDS REVEAL THE PCMA TO BE A VIOLENCE PRONE SPLINTER GROUP FROM THE COMMUNIST PARTY OF ARGENTINA, BUT THERE

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IS NO RECORD OF AN EPL "ARMED BRANCH".

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3. PRESS STORIES YESTERDAY INDICATED THAT MRS. ESTEBAN HAD VISITED HER HUSBAND IN THE PRISON INFIRMARY.

4. COMMENT. WHAT INTERESTS US ABOUT THIS CASE IS ESTEBAN'S PUBLICIZED TRANSFER FROM THE COVERT SECURITY SYSTEM INTO THE HANDS OF USUAL MILITARY AUTHORITIES AND BEING FORMALLY CHARGED. WE BELIEVE THIS KIND OF PUBLICITY HAS EARLIER ATTENDED ONLY THE DEUTSCH CASE. THE EXPLICIT REFERENCE TO A TERRORIST SUSPECT AND HIS AFFILIATIONS IS SIMILARLY UNUSUAL. WE TAKE ALL THIS AS EVIDENCE OF EXTRAORDINARY INTEREST BY VIOLA AND PROBABLY OTHERS IN THE ESTEBAN CASE, AND WILLINGNESS ON THESE PERSONS' PART TO SHAKE THE REPRESSIVE "MACHINERY" SUDDENLY AND VERY HARD.

5. ADDENDUM: WE LEARNED AS THIS TELEGRAM WAS IN PREPARATION THAT NOEMI PANIGUA AND LUIS ALBERTO ROCHE, TWO DISAPPEARED LA PLATA UNIVERSITY STUDENTS, HAVE BEEN RETURNED TO THEIR FAMILIES.

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